

FWP COMMISSION AGENDA ITEM COVER SHEET

Meeting Date: August 18, 2011

Agenda Item: Calf Creek WMA Fee-Title Donation (Region 2, Ravalli County)

Division: Wildlife

Action Needed: **Endorse Course of Action:** X

Time Needed on Agenda for this Presentation: 10 minutes

Background (Brief description of the issue, decision to be made, history, etc.):

Region 2 proposes to accept the donation of fee-title ownership of approximately 70 acres adjoining Calf Creek Wildlife Management Area (WMA), northeast of Hamilton. Calf Creek WMA was acquired by FWP for elk winter range in 1960, and currently consists of 2,333 acres. The proposed 70-acre addition shares almost ½-mile of common boundary with the WMA, and would add a ¼-mile buffer from adjoining developed and further developable private lands. The 70-acre addition also contains the primary administrative access road to the WMA. (Public access is non-motorized from a separate parking area.) This donation is offered by Ms Christopher Young, the owner of the subject parcel, with the intent that the gift be accomplished by the end of 2011,

The 70-acre parcel is a historically grazed pasture of native and non-native grasses, and is non-forested, without buildings or other development. FWP currently maintains the fence between the two properties, and would simply transfer that effort to the new boundary upon acquisition. The primary benefit of acquiring this property would be an enhanced ability to manage and control public access during open and closed periods on the WMA, and the ability to avoid subdivision and development in a location where impacts from development would be significant. The property would be open to non-motorized access from April 15 through December 1, along with the rest of Calf Creek WMA.

Public Involvement Process & Results (Brief description of the type of public involvement and summary of what we heard from the public): Formal public involvement would follow the Commission's endorsement and further negotiations with the landowner.

Alternatives and Analysis (Brief description of alternative solutions with analysis of the pros and cons of each): No-action is the only practical alternative to this proposed action.

Agency Recommendation & Rationale (Brief description of our recommendation to the Commission and the reasons for it): FWP recommends that the Commission endorse this proposal and allow Region 2 to prepare an EA and conduct a public involvement process. This process would result in a more detailed description and analysis of the proposal, and would bring to light any issues from the public. FWP would present the results of the public involvement process to the Commission for final action this fall.

Proposed Motion (Draft language the Commission could use to adopt the agency recommendation): Move that the Commission endorse the Department's proposal to pursue the acquisition (by donation) of 70 acres adjoining Calf Creek WMA.